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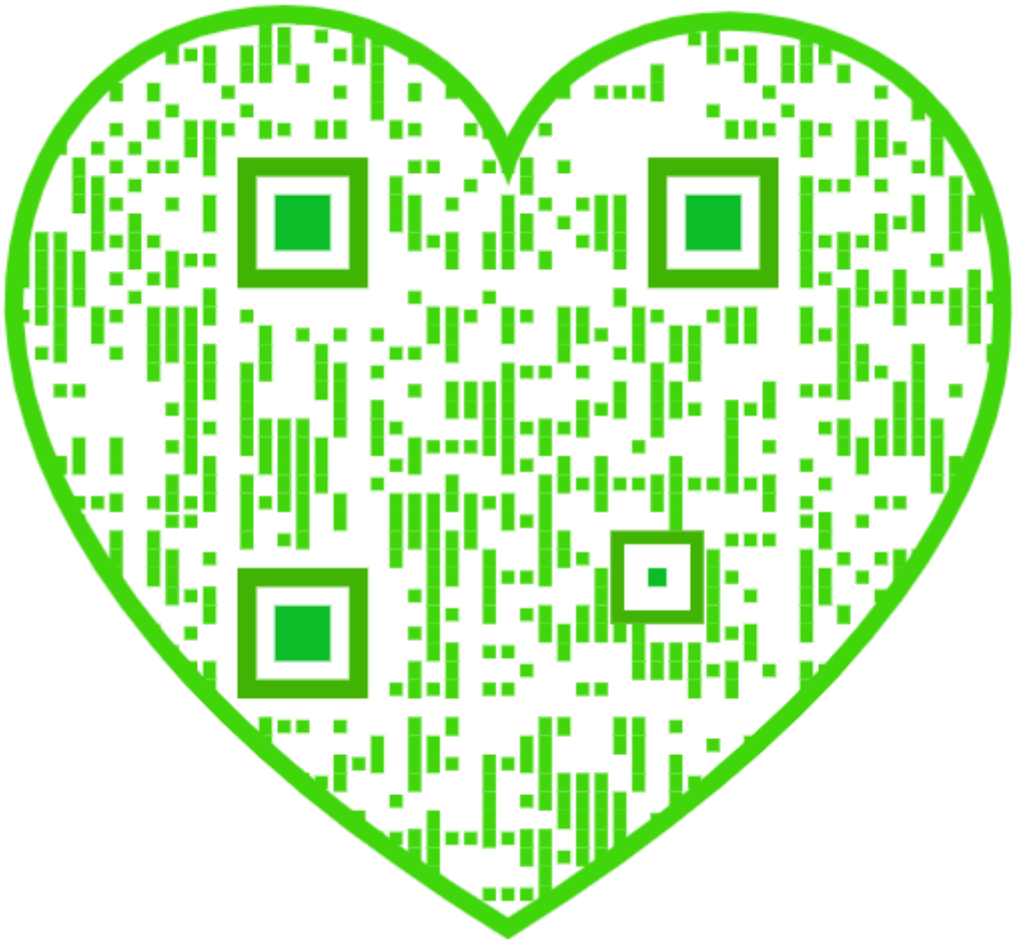
ORIENTAL
UG WEAVING

ILLUSTRATED



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A Persian Beauty.

ORIENTAL RUG WEAVING

BY

V. GURDJI

ILLUSTRATED

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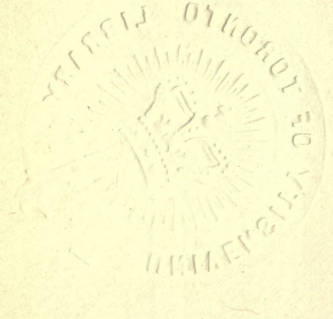

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PREFACE.

My aim has been to give to the lovers of Oriental rugs a brief and comprehensive idea of this comparatively unknown art.

I make no pretension of this being a complete work, as volumes could be written on this almost inexhaustible subject.

The information has been collected here and there during a residence of several years in the Orient. The trouble of preparing this book will be fully repaid if it to any extent satisfies the public craving for knowledge of this art.

My idea has been to give as briefly as possible intelligent information as to the different points concerning rug making, which I hope will prove of interest to those who have a penchant for these treasures of the Orient; gems full of the mystic folklore and splendor of a semi-barbaric people, yet with it all possessing such artistic beauty of design and execution that they appeal to the connoisseurs and art lovers of every country.

V. GURDJI.

Oriental Rug Weaving.

We learn that the art of weaving was one of the oldest industries of mankind. Long before Christ, straw and other coarse materials were woven to make a sort of floor covering in Babylonia, the art soon spreading over Persia and other Asiatic countries.

Archeological discoveries made lately in Babylonia prove that rugs were in existence twelve or thirteen centuries before Christ, and that the art may have been known long before that time, but there is no data that can be found to prove this.

In the books of Solomon and Ezekiel in the Old Testament we find mention made in several places of carpets, and the wealthy Romans and Greeks in the time of Homer had some magnificent floor coverings worth fortunes.

The word carpet is either derived from the Latin *tapestes* or the Hebrew *carpos*. Rugs and

floor coverings were originally used to sit, recline and sleep on, and also for religious purposes, by the high priests of that period. The palaces of Pharaoh were garnished with the best makes of his time. Superb hued carpets were spread on the tomb of Cyrus and in front of the throne of Emperor Honorius. This art obtained a higher degree of workmanship in Persia and Turkey than in any of the other Asiatic countries, as rugs constituted the principal furniture of the people. The homes of most of the nomadic tribes consist of mud huts or tents, on the earthen floor of which they spread a hasser (coarse straw matting) or numud ketché (a heavy felt), and over these are thrown the rugs or carpets.

In the homes of princes or khans the reception room (or missafer odase) is furnished with a sort of platform a few inches higher than the floor, and extending across the head and sides of the room. Over this platform rugs are spread for the honored guests to sit on, the center of the floor being reserved for the slaves, okkabaz (jugglers) and musicians.

This mode of living is carried on from time

immemorial in Persia and most parts of Asia Minor.

The number of rugs that are supplied to Europe and this country is a source of wonder to a great many people who cannot understand how such quantities can be produced when one considers the length of time it requires to make a single piece.

But when one stops to think that the people who supply these very popular floor coverings have absolutely nothing else to occupy their minds, no newspapers, no magazines or books to read, no worries about fashions in dress, and although endowed with the proverbial patience they will not perform any sort of work which requires energy, it will be seen that they must have something to while away their time, and rug making proves to be both their amusement and a source of income. Children are born among these surroundings and at an incredibly early age absorb the art, and so it extends from generation to generation.

WEAVING

The Eastern method of weaving is exceedingly tedious, consisting of knots and stitches made with the fingers, one by one. Young Mahometan women and girls are

the principal weavers, but at times the whole family and neighbors take a hand on a large piece. There being no regular factories, so to speak, the weaving is carried on in their homes, which consist of mud huts and tents, or in the open air. The regularly employed weavers do not receive more than twenty to thirty shahis Persian money per week, or about twenty or thirty cents in our money. Of course very skillful weavers command higher compensation.

LOOM

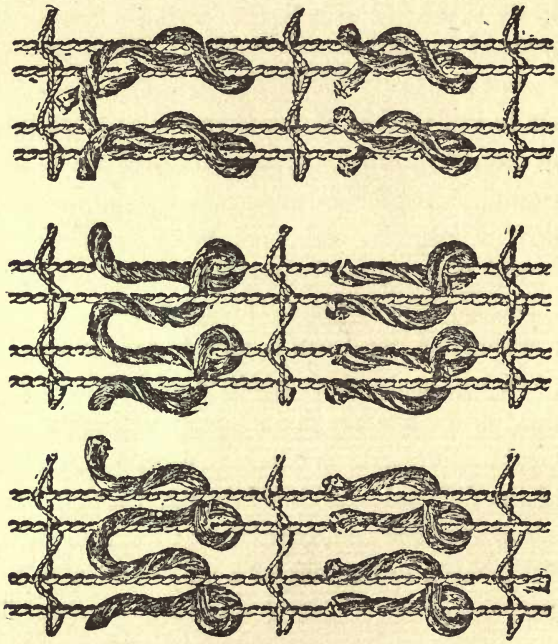
There is no complicated apparatus used for weaving rugs. All that is required is a tezghiah or loom, which is a very primitive affair, consisting of four rough poles joined together with ropes, and regulated according to the size of the rug to be woven. On these poles the warp is stretched vertically and a smooth stick is inserted between the warp for a shuttle. The warp is kept uniform by stone weights hanging on both sides of the poles. The skilled and patient weavers sit cross-legged or kneeling a trifle higher than the ground in front of the loom. But before commencing to weave the rug they raise their voices to

A Turkish Beauty.

'Allah with the following prayer: "Bismi lahi rahmani rahim" in the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful. (This exhortation is used by nearly all devout Mahometans at the commencement of any sort of undertaking.) Then starting from right to left in horizontal rows the weavers tie to two threads of the warp one or more tufts of colored yarn, varying and mixing the colors according to the design well-founded and created in their mind. Several rows being completed, a smooth stick is passed across the loom to tighten or loosen wherever the occasion may require, and then a wooden or iron comb is used to press the knots down and make them uniform and tight before shearing off the rough surface, which requires a great deal of skill. I here give a few illustrations of the different knots used in rug weaving. We hardly ever find two Oriental rugs that are exactly alike, owing to the lack of a set design, with the exception of a few kenar (or hall rugs) and saddle bags, which are sometimes made in pairs.

Some of the antique Anatolian rugs are made in sections, and the edges then woven together, giving them a patched effect. The patterns are always

original, and it depends on the taste of the weaver whether the design be floral, geometrical or zoölogical.



Some of the Knots Used in Weaving Oriental Rugs.

To demonstrate the length of time it takes to make a rug, say a fine Kermanshah, size 7x4 feet,

we first figure how many square feet there are in the piece: 7x4=28 square feet, which is 4,032 square inches. Now a Kermanshah rug at least has as many as twenty knots to the inch, or 400 to the square inch, a total of 1,612,800 knots in the whole 7x4 feet piece. A very skillful weaver cannot tie more than three knots in a minute, or 180 knots in an hour, and if he works eight hours a day, it will take him almost four years to complete this work of art.

The chief beauty in an Oriental rug consists in the harmonious blending of colors and the softness of the texture, which makes it very agreeable to the touch, as well as pleasing to the eye. To obtain such an effect the stock raised for this purpose is very carefully looked after, and nothing but the very purest wool enters into the fine pieces.

Very often the sheep or goat is covered over with a sheet to protect the wool, which is of a long, silky fibre, and also to preserve its lustre. The finest grade of wools is obtained principally from stock raised in the province of Khorassan and Kurdistan.

Besides wool and goats' hair, sometimes other materials, such as silk, camel's hair, linen, cotton and

hemp are used in making rugs. Hogs' or dogs' hair is never used, as according to the Mahometan religion these are considered unclean animals.

The process of dyeing the wool and other materials used in making rugs is done almost exclusively by men, who are called boyajilar (or dyers), there being one or more of these specialists in each district who prepare this yarn for the weavers in case they cannot do it in their own homes.

As the great glory of an Oriental rug is its exquisite colorings, therefore a great deal of care is necessary in the dyeing process, which is a most difficult one. The different colors are extracted from certain leaves, roots, barks and vegetable matter and also from flowers, by boiling and reboiling or by a process of fermentation, until a satisfactory shade has been obtained. Another requisite that is very necessary is that materials to be dyed should be very clean, and in the case of wool it is first washed a number of times in cold water to remove all foreign matter and still retain the animal fat, which gives the wool such a soft and silky appearance when woven into the rugs.

After the wool has been properly cleaned it is then dipped into the dye for a prescribed length of time, and when the desired shade has been obtained it is spread out in the sun without having been wrung out.

Again care must be exercised that it is not exposed to the sun's rays for too long a time or the process has to be gone over again.

Of late years aniline dyes have been introduced into Russian provinces as well as some parts of Persia, although there are very strict laws in Persia forbidding their use.

The present shah, Musaffer-ed-Din, Shah-in-Shah, has caused a law to be passed which is intended to protect home industry, and keep intact the national art. This law forbids the importation of any European dyes, and also prescribes severe punishment for parties found guilty of using these dyes as well as confiscation of all goods in which they are used.

One of the reasons that we find some old rugs that have seen generations of wear and are still in a perfect state of preservation, with the matchless sheen that time only gives, is on account of the

way the Mussulmans, and for that matter the Christians of the East, treat their rugs. They always remove their shoes before entering their homes, and either go barefooted or put on a pabooch (or sort of sandal) with soft soles, and it is to this circumstance, no doubt, that ancient carpets that have embodied years of artistic labor remain in such beautiful condition.

Prior to fifty or seventy-five years ago the Persians and Turks made most of the rugs for their own use or to be presented to princes, masters and lords, or to be given away as a token of love and esteem during the Mevlout (a holiday corresponding to our Christmas, it being the birthday of the prophet Mahomet); also as a wedding gift the blushing maiden always presented to her lord a piece of her dainty handiwork in the form of a rug or divan cover.

Every one of these rugs have their own individuality, as they are altogether the creation of the artists who weave them.

They should be looked upon in the same light that we look on a bit of fine tapestry or a painting of great worth, as they are the masterpieces of the East.

To the novice and unpracticed eye there is a sameness in the beautiful Eastern weave. Of course, at a superficial glance they do not see the artistic merit. But on further study no one can fail to appreciate the marvelous blending of colors and the exquisite designs.

And, coming as they do from the mysterious recesses of Asia, these rugs carry with them that air of Oriental splendor which must give us some faint idea of the past glory of these Asiatic tribes. We never find figures of man or animal on Turkish rugs, the Turks being Sunneh Mahometans, and the teachings of the Koran forbids this for fear it might lead to idolatry.

On the other hand the Persians, being Sheed Mahometans, weave animals, birds and also human figures into their rugs and carpets.

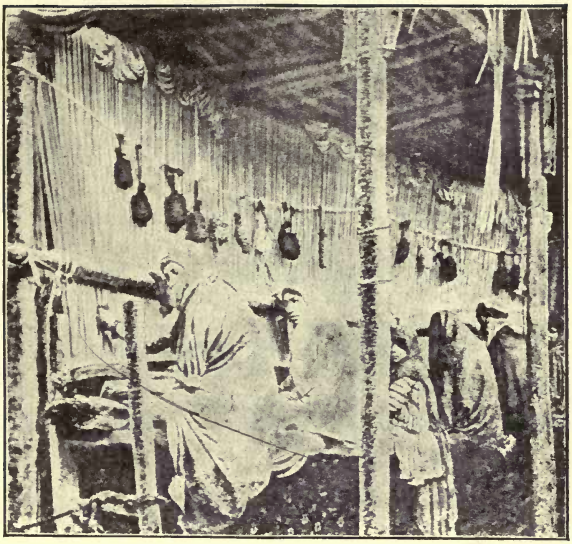
There is proof positive that this custom of weaving human figures and animals has been prehistoric from the time of Babylonia, whose people were skillful in weaving all sorts of animals, such as sphynx, dragons, lions, and griffins, as well as whole groups of human figures. Antique pieces of such subjects are, of course, unobtainable now.

But in the Kensington museum is shown a magnificent collection of this early period which has cost enormous prices. The preëminence of the ancient Babylonian carpet weavers does not appear to have been lost by their successors. At the present time Persian carpets are as eagerly sought as they were when ancient Babylon was in its glory.

We also quite frequently find some choice specimens of rugs with turjiyat and roubiyat (poems and quotations), taken from the writings of famous Persian poets, such as Saadi, Ferdouzi and Hafiz; also from the Koran.

If the possessors of some of the rare pieces that are sold in this country knew the meaning of the inscriptions woven in their rugs, the knowledge would add a charm and interest which would make them more valuable than the harmonious colors so beautifully blended, which at first compels admiration.

I will give a few of the bayit (or Persian couplets), with pronunciation and translation, taken from some rugs which I have seen. They will give some idea of the beauty and flowery sayings



Persian Women Weaving.

of the Persian poets. I must state, however, that it is very difficult to portray the full meaning or interpret the spirit of these poems.

No. I.

The following inscriptions are from a beautiful Kerman rug that may have adorned the harem of a khan in Persia.

چه خوش گفت بلبل بگل در چمن
که خوش آمدی که خوش روز مدنت
کرم نما رواق و منظر چشم من استانه
فرو دانی خانه خانه تو است تو است

PRONUNCIATION:

Chi hosh goft bulbul beghol derehman.

Ke hosh amméde ke hosh rooz madanēt.

Karēm nooma ravāt vé manzarē cheshmumen astané.

Féroudane Khané Khané too est too est.

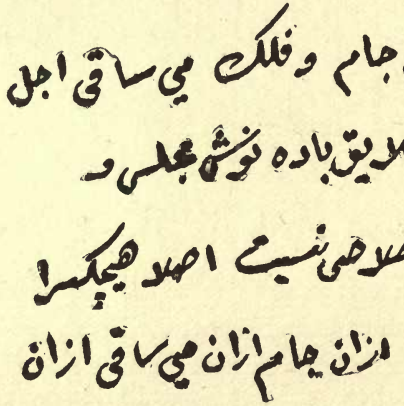
TRANSLATION:

How cheerfully and confusedly the nightingale

sang to the rose, I welcome thee, this bright morn. Be merciful and gaze down from (your) balcony to delight my anxious eyes, for thou alone art my comfort and place of refuge.

No. II.

This inscription from a magnificent silk rug now graces a charming American home:



PRONUNCIATION:

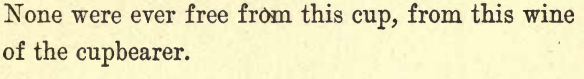
Jihani jaām vé félèk may-you saki-i édjèl,
Khélayik badé noush majlisvé.
Khélas nay-yot asla hitch Kessrā.
Azani jaām azani may-you saki-i azan.

TRANSLATION:

The world is a cup and destiny the deadly wine of the cupbearer. Men drank it in company. None were ever free from this cup, from this wine of the cupbearer.

No. III.

This one, which is taken from a most artistic Kermanshah rug, undoubtedly has graced the palace of some romantic nobleman. It reads thus:



PRONUNCIATION:

"A jahan rā moobārèk bā-ad."

Sakē banorē bā-adé, bēr afzooze jāamē māā, batarbē bagho ke kearre, jehan shud béghiamē māā;

Māā dēr payialayi essa,

Roohoo yar deda am, ay bécheze zeel-lazèt, sharbe abadam māā; Chandan bood gharishmé vé, naze pay-you ghadda ān, ghiakhē gha-jalvé serroo, soonoo-roo jézamē māā.

TRANSLATION:

"May you be fortunate in this world."

O! cup bearer, fill my burning cup with sparkling wine, speak to me in mirth, for I do not care for all the deeds of this world. I have seen the rosy cheek of my love in the cup of the Prophet.

Ah! for this brief joy I still cling to my goblet; many have bowed before that stately houri, I likewise bow with respect and obeisance.

No. IV.

In the following inscription the sentiments of some Persian philosopher are voiced. No doubt he has enjoyed life fully, and he does not care what comes afterwards.

وه که از وجوده تنیم چه خونتوانت

PRONUNCIATION:

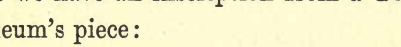
Vakh-ke az vajoodé taneem chee khoon né toovanèt.

TRANSLATION:

Oh! after this existence to what sufferings may my soul fall heir.

No. V.

Here we have an inscription from a Turbeh, or mausoleum's piece:



PRONUNCIATION:

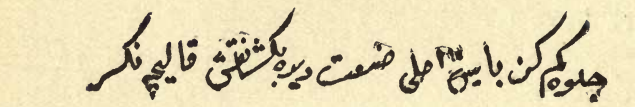
Bā dar-sayéyi darakh-tanish keustar i-yend farshe bookalamoon.

TRANSLATION:

Beneath the shadow of a tree spreads chameleon-like delightful parterre.

No. VI.

To this artist we are indebted for a lecture counseling us not to despise any rug. He says:



PRONUNCIATION:

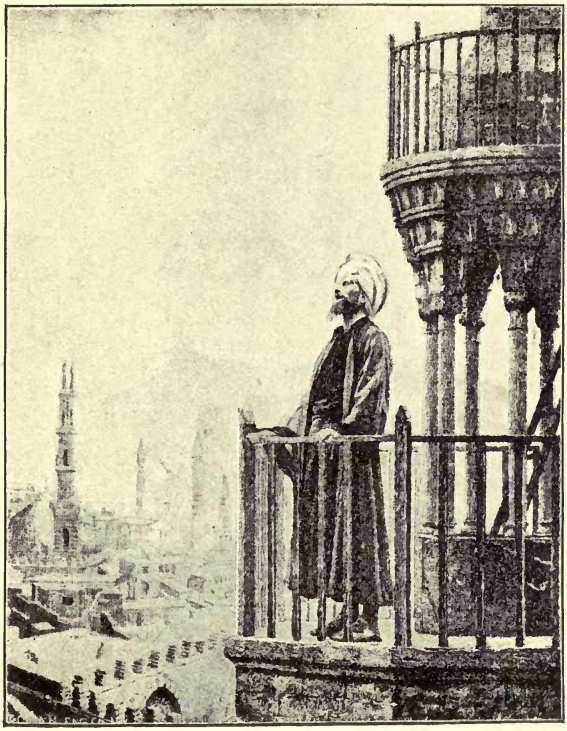
Jilvé kèm khun bayyin ēhle sānat herr dedé be kusha nakshe kalechéï nœukèr.

TRANSLATION:

However small and insignificant the design of a rug may be, it nevertheless calls forth the attention of a most humble artist.

SUPERSTITION

The presence of Persian characters in the design of a rug would have absolutely no significance to those not familiar with the language. They appear to be merely fanciful conceptions of the designer. There are also many other suggestions connected with Oriental rugs and their making of deep significance to the Eastern mind. For instance, we often find a bead woven into a rug. The bead is put there to guard against the evil eye, belief in which is one of the most deep-rooted of Eastern superstitions, and many are the attempts to prevent it. To illustrate, an artist is engaged in weaving



Muezzin Calling to Prayers from the Balcony of a Minaret of a Mosque in Egypt.

a rug and some one who visits him admires his work, but unless he prefaces his praise with the following prayer, "Mash Allah, Mash Allah," (God be praised, God be praised), the wearer very quickly sews in a bead to prevent ill luck from attending the completion of the piece, or from going with it after it leaves his or her hands.

So far is this superstition carried out that you will see a child in its mother's arms, with a few beads or a string of garlic around its neck. A bird, a horse, and even a house is treated in the same manner with white, red, blue or green beads and garlic. A verse from the Koran is also considered a very effective charm.

We also find a peculiar mark of one or more tufts of wool unclipped on rugs. These adornments are supposed to bring good luck and by their attractiveness divert the evil looks of the envious. Again you will find the designs of rugs slightly irregular or imperfect. This is not the result of carelessness or accident, but is done intentionally by some devout artist.

It is thus intended to show that nothing but Allah (God) can be perfect.

Oriental rugs are divided into six groups:

FIRST—PERSIAN or IRANIAN.

SECOND—TURKISH or ANATOLIAN (Asia Minor).

THIRD—CAUCASIAN or DAGHESTAN.

FOURTH—TURKESTAN or TURCOMAN.

FIFTH—AFGHAN or AFGHANISTAN.

SIXTH—BELOOCH or BELOOCHISTAN.

Most of the names given to rugs are either derived from the province, district, town or tribe, in which they are made.

But there are also a few names used which are purely commercial inventions.

FIRST—THE PERSIAN OR IRANIANS:

Khorassan,
Kerman,
Kermanshah,
Sinneh or Sannah,
Shiraz,
Mir,
Herez,
Serebend,
Feraghan,

Serap,
Ardabul,
Savalan,
Lulé,
Goravan,
Bijar,
Ispahan,
Hamadan,
Shedda,
Tabriz,
Gulistan,
Khaim,
Sarack,
Sohouk-Boulak,
Boulak,
Joshghan,
Kurdistan,
Sinneh-Kilim.

SECOND — TURKISH OR ANATOLIANS (Asia Minor):

Ghioerdez or Yeordez,
Coula,
Ladic,

Kir-Shehir,
Melez,
Bergama,
Koniah,
Ismir,
Kissesar,
Caraman,
Merden,
Mossoul,
Kurdistan,
Kiz-Kilim,

and the larger sized carpets, which are modern, such as:

Hamidié,
Gulistan,
Osmanié,
Enelli,
Demirjik,
Oushak,
Yuruk,
Yaprak,
Injé,
Mohair,
Nazik.

THIRD—CAUCASIAN OR DAGHESTAN:

Cabistan,
Guenjé,
Chichi or Tcherchen,
Kazakja,
Shirvan,
Derebend,
Carabagh,
Baku,
Kazak,
Cashmere or Soumac.

FOURTH—TURKESTAN OR TURCOMAN:

Bokhara,
Samarcand.

FIFTH—AFGHAN OR AFGHANISTAN:

Khiva,
Afghan,
Yamoud,
Beshir.

SIXTH—BELOOCH OR BELOOCHISTAN.

PERSIAN OR IRANIAN.

Persian or Iranian rugs are oblong in shape, and but very few large sized real antique carpets are in existence.

They are very closely woven and most beautiful in design and colorings, red, green, blue, old gold and ivory white being the general colors. Each of these colors has its significance. Red denotes life; white, purity; green, immortality; old gold, nobility.

Some of the antique or semi-antique Iranians are called palace runners, and are used in large halls in Persia and other Asiatic countries. They vary in size from ten to twenty feet in length, and from five to eight feet in width. The oblong shape of the rug is due largely to the form of the rooms in Persian houses, which, like almost every other Persian custom, is accounted for by superstition, it being a belief of the Mahometans that when the devil gets into a square room it is a difficult matter to drive him out, while in an oblong room he is easily scared away. However, I am more in-

Kurdish Woman Carding Wool.

clined to believe that the scarcity of long pieces of lumber compels them to build mostly narrow and oblong shaped rooms.

To describe the distinguishing characteristics of the different groups and to attempt to particularize would be a vain task, as some rugs, on account of their peculiar design and weave, almost defy a positive classification. This is accounted for in the case of a weaver or group of weavers migrating from one province to another, and intermingling their ideas with the new ones they acquire, thereby producing a work which will have the distinctive characteristic of two or more designs from different provinces combined into one rug, or in case of the death of a weaver, when another artist will attempt to finish his work and introduce entirely contrasting designs and patterns, not belonging to any special group. Of course, in this case it is almost impossible to intelligently classify the rug, or to positively or correctly place it in any group. However, the salient points more or less characteristic of each family might be interesting.

To know at a glance the make of each rug is a

matter of practice, the most notable points being the design, figures, colors, pile, shape, etc.

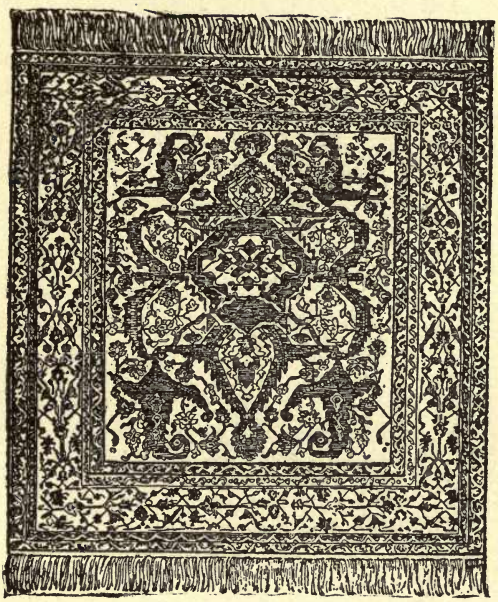
Palm leaf, rosettes, floral, serpentine effects, birds, animals, hunting scenes, etc., are seen in Persians.

Geometrical designs in the Daghestan family and almost invariably elongated octagon figures, in Bokharas and Afghans of the nomadic tribes of Asia, and also in Cashmeres or Soumacs, as the Turks call them.

SILK RUGS

Almost all the silk rugs which we find in the market now are of modern make. Whenever an antique one has found its way to this country it has been quickly secured by connoisseurs.

But even the modern ones are very fine examples of the artistic skill of the Eastern people. The blending of colors in some of the choice pieces where tones of turquoise gold and green merge into one another would defy any artist of the brush. It has been the privilege of the writer to visit some of the turbehs (or mausoleums) of the Eastern countries, and what treasures are hidden away in



Royal Silk Iran Rug.

these places. Over some of the tombs are rugs that are priceless. Rugs with inscriptions worked in precious stones, shawls of gorgeous hues and embroideries on cloth of gold and silver. Also in the mosques and palaces we find some splendid examples of the antique silk rugs.

Benjamin, in his book, "Persia and the Persians," mentions a silk rug which is spread in front of the celebrated peacock throne in the audience hall of the shah's palace which is interwoven with pearls. He says it is the finest specimen of a silk rug he has ever seen. These Persian silk rugs come in every conceivable color from the daintiest shades to the most gorgeously brilliant ones, and the designs are either floral effects or historical subjects, illustrating sacred hunting scenes, etc., such as we see on the very fine Kerman rugs. They are exceedingly closely woven and in size they are found from small mat sizes up to 18x14 feet.

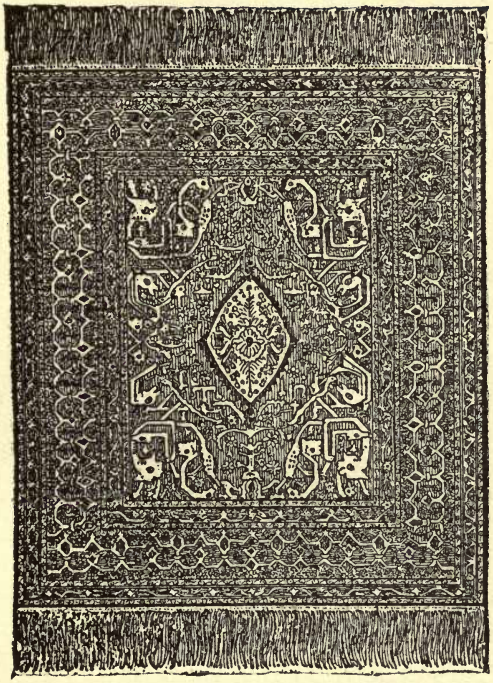
KHORASSAN

Which means in Persian "eastwards" is the largest province of Persia bordering on Afghanistan. One-third of the area consists of a salt waste, and

a large portion is covered with shifting sands. The fertile districts are in the north, where most of the rugs are woven. Besides rugs and agricultural products, the district is famous for precious stones, especially turquoise.

The capital of the province, Meshed, was the birthplace of the famous tent-maker poet, Omar Khayyám, with whose beautiful verses we are so familiar. And his tomb is still in existence in Naishapur, another town of the province, where he was buried in the eleventh century. From Khorassan we get some of the finest specimens of the antique rugs of Persia. They come in medium and large oblong pieces, with thick pile very silky and pliable. Large rosette in the centre and a palm leaf in each corner inside the borders are the distinguishing characteristics of most Khorassans. They also come in small figures with exquisite narrow borders, sometimes with as many as eight or ten borders on a piece. The colors are red, old rose, blue and pale green. The modern carpet size Khorassans are not found in the beautiful soft colors of the antique ones, but they are of just as fine texture, and no doubt after years of service

Gypsy Beggars.



Silk Rug with Symbolical Representations.

they will mellow down and appeal to artistic admiration.

KERMAN

One of the eastern provinces of Persia, lying south of Khorassan, and on the north surrounded by a large salt desert. The chief town, Kerman, is situated in the mountain range, and has a population of 35,000.

The antique rugs made in this province are marvelous works of art. The prevailing designs are a sort of floral medallion in the centre, surrounded by mythological subjects, such as birds, animals, hunting scenes, etc., which reveal the deeds and past history of the rulers of the East.

The colors are very delicate, the texture exceedingly closely woven and rather thin. They come in medium and large sizes, and connoisseurs and lovers of fine pieces are keen to procure them, as they are considered the gems of Persian looms.

SINNEH

Next to Kerman in quality we have Sinnehs, the name of which is derived from the town of Sanna, surrounded with beautiful gardens, in the province of Irak-Adjemi (or Far Persia).

Sinnehs are closely woven, of light texture, and rarely come larger than six to seven feet by three and a half to four feet.

Dark rich reds, blues, ivory and yellows are the principal colors.

The designs are in small figure or diamond shaped medallions of different colors. They have from one to four beautiful borders.

There is a square shaped Sinneh made exclusively for the high dignitaries to use as saddle covers, the centre is sometimes of solid color, with effective designs in the corners.

It has a small opening at one side to fit on the saddle.

These rugs are usually trimmed with very elaborate fringe.

There is also a sort of Kilim, called Sinneh-Kilim, made in the same province. This is worked with a needle, and both sides are alike, having no naps. In size they do not exceed Sinneh rugs. They are very appropriate for table, couch and piano covers.

Antique Kerman Rug, Hunting Scene.

FERAGHAN

These rugs are made in the province of Feraghani. All the antique ones are of oblong shape, and they vary in size from 5x3 up to 22x8 feet. The designs are a sort of half moon, rosettes and geometrical figures, all over the rug, on a blue background, with exquisite borders of green, yellow and red.

Some antique Feraghans are also found with an ivory background, showing a medallion in the centre, and superb *bleu de sèvre* colors as panels in the corners. They are of close texture, and sometimes linen is used for the warp. Modern Feraghans are mostly found in carpet sizes and of bright colors.

SHIRAZ

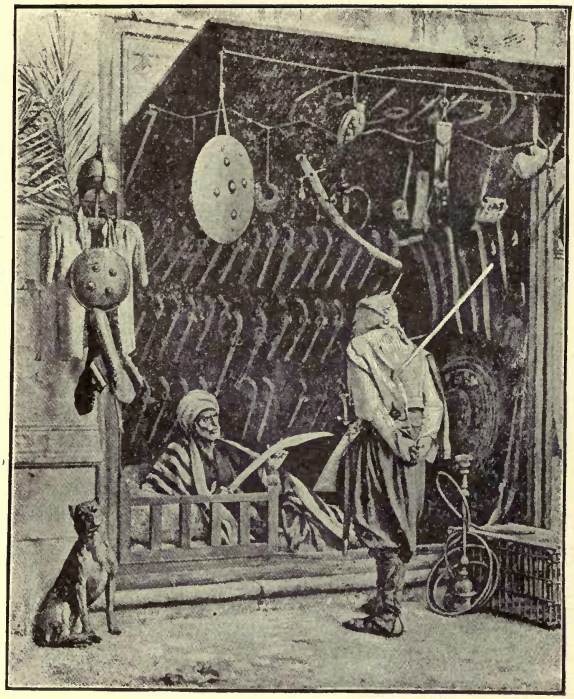
Capital of the province of Farsistan, much celebrated in Persian poetry for its climate, its wine and roses, and its beautiful gardens. Also famous as a pleasure resort for the Persian princes.

Previous to the disastrous earthquake of 1853, which laid almost the whole town in ruins and caused the death of 10,000 people, the place was

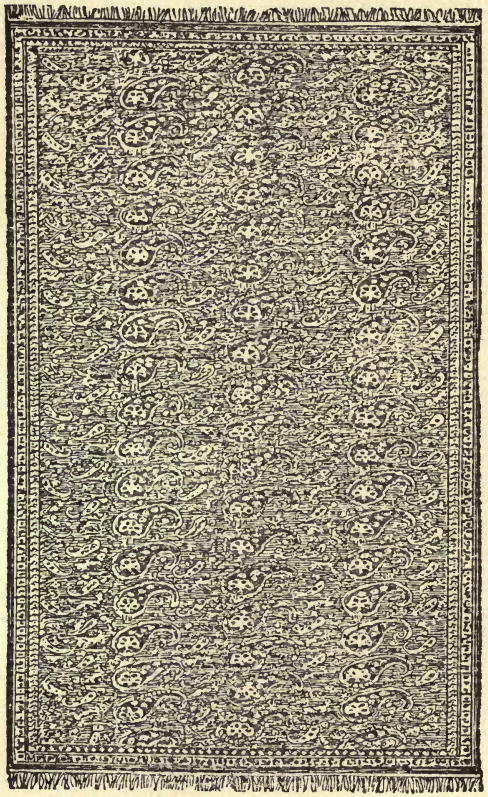
noted as the art-mart of Persia for marvelous inlaid articles of glass, wood and metal. And one can still find there the most dazzling embroideries, cups of silver and gold inlaid with superb enamels, boxes carved and painted with scenes of Persian life or inlaid with delicate ivory patterns, velvets massive with silver and gold thread, antique gems engraved with verses from Hafiz or Khayyám, plaques of cashee ware, *reflet "metaliques,"* five hundred to a thousand years old, illuminated manuscripts with quaint and characteristic designs, diamonds, rubies, pearls and turquoise, for which Persia is famous, as well as rugs whose exquisite designs symbolized the poetical and flowery imagination of the Orientals. Amid such surroundings lived the noted Persian poets, Saadi and Hafiz. They are both buried in the vicinity of Shiraz.

"May my body rest in this garden spot,
Where the nightingale pipes its love song to the Rose."

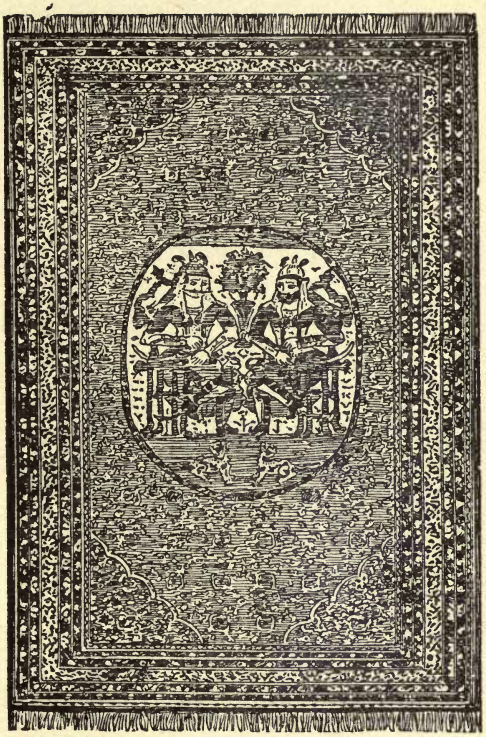
The rugs from this district are of a softer texture, and more silky lustre than any of the other



Arms and Armor Shop.



Royal Antique Sinneh Rug.



Antique Sinneh, Representing a Royal Conference.

Iranian family. They are easily distinguished by their long fancy selvage. The patterns are palm leaf, geometrical figures, and also stripes.

The colors are dark blues and rich reds. They are never found in sizes larger than 15x7 feet, and are mostly of oblong shape, but now and then a few square pieces are met with.

SEREBENDS

Are similar in shape to Feraghan rugs but not in texture, design or colorings. They invariably come in the so-called palm leaf design in red on dark blue background or dark blue on soft red background.

The name of palm leaf or locust is a misnomer. The design is derived, it is said, from the shape of a sacred river in Cashmere, called Guevrish chai (or Loop River). Most of the pious Mahometans of central Asia, instead of making the pilgrimage to Mecca or Medina (in Arabia) travel to the famous mosque situated in the mountains of Takht-i-Suleiman, and after their tiresome journey the travelers are so much impressed with the sublime scenery of the enchanting Cashmere Val-

ley and this beautiful river twining itself into a sort of a loop, that on their return to their native land it is the impression of this view which they weave into the shawl and rugs that we call the palm leaf or locust design.

I have no hesitancy in stating that the pear shaped design which we find in a great many Persian rugs, as well as on some of the Turkish ones, must have been derived from Cashmere. Some very old bits of Cashmere fabric with this pattern are seen in the museums of the great capital, and having no proof positive to show that rugs with this design antedate the palm leaf seen in shawls it is reasonable to infer that the pattern originated in Cashmere.

HAMADAN

The capital of the province of Irak-Adjemi is situated at the northern base of Mount Elvend, 160 miles west by southwest of Teheran. It contains some notable tombs. The city with its 35,000 inhabitants has a large traffic with Teheran, Ispahan, Bagdad, etc.

Hamadan rugs come in both small and large

Rare Antique Ispahan Rug, Representing a Royal Pageant.

Antique Kerman, Representing Royal Garden.

sizes. They are mostly modern, having a great deal of camel's hair in them.

The predominating design is a medallion on a solid color background of ivory, red, blue or terra cotta. Very few of the antique pieces are obtainable.

SADDLE BAGS

Or Haybaliks come mostly from Persia, although there are some made in other Asiatic countries. They always come in pairs, and in the East they answer a great many more purposes than our trunks and handbags do here. Their principal use, however, is for carrying personal effects, provisions, etc., as well as children. They are thrown over the backs of horses, camels, or donkeys.

In this country the use is very different. As the shape is mostly square or oblong, they can be turned into a beautiful ottoman or cushion cover, and in smoking rooms, artist's studios or bachelors' apartments they make a useful as well as artistic receptacle for papers, magazines, etc.

GORAVANS

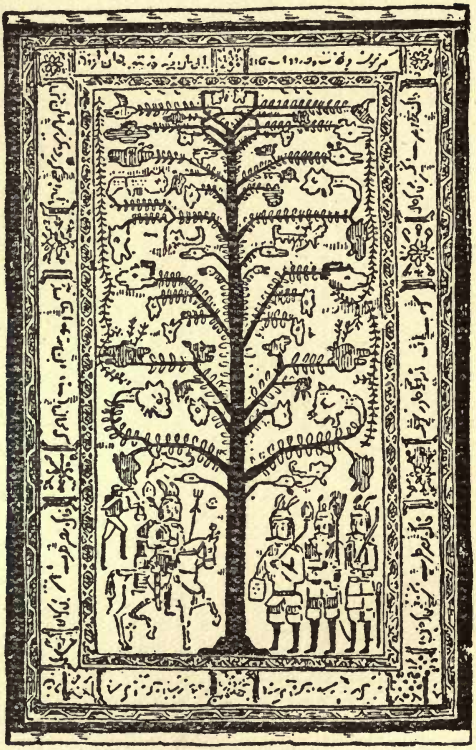
Rugs of this make have had great popularity lately on account of their bold designs, attractive colors and size.

They come in soft and dark blues, rich reds and yellows, with medallion in centre, large panels in corners, either in red or blue, with floral or geometrical effects. They usually have three borders, one wide and two narrow ones, consisting of floral scrolls on écru or ivory background. Sometimes large Goravans have Persian inscriptions all around the border.

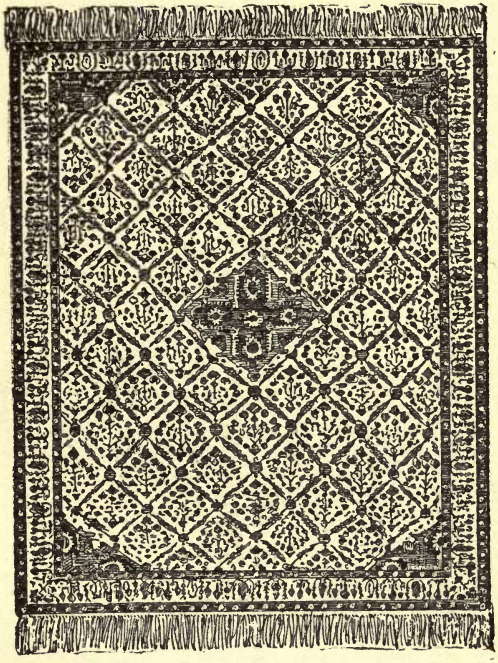
They come from 6x4 up to 26x18 feet.

MODERN CARPETS

As most of the modern carpets are made to order from designs and patterns supplied by well-known importing houses of both this country and Europe, it will be impossible to give an intelligent description of either colors, designs or texture; as each large importing establishment is constantly supplying different designs to suit requirements and tastes of their patrons. I would, however, state that most of the new large carpets come with



Antique Kerman, Representing Tree of Life and the Conflict Between Evil and Good.



Antique Sinneh Rug.

very heavy pile, loose weave and very vivid colors, and as to durability some of them will compare very favorable with the antique makes.

Persian Coat of Arms.

As the American people at large are not very familiar with the beautiful emblem of Persia, a brief description will, no doubt, be interesting.

The "arms" of Persia consist of a lion holding an open yataghan uplifted in its right paw and the rising sun dominating from its back. Persians from their earliest history have been fire and sun worshipers. So the sun had been their insignia for generations before they adopted the faith of Mahomet. The lion was added about eight cen-

turies ago, it being the emblem of one of the nomadic tribes whom the Persians had conquered.

The double-edged sword signifies the absolute power of the Persian rulers.

This emblem is used as a coat of arms, on the coins and decorations, as well as on the flag.

The flag colors are yellow gold on green background.

Antique Kerman Rug.

TURKISH OR ANATOLIAN.

Now we come to the Turkish family of rugs and among these there are some very rare and antique pieces which are much sought after by collectors and art lovers on account of their soft rich colorings and distinctive designs. Of course they command a very high price. Among the choicest and rarest of these are the following:

SILK RUGS. Are made principally in Cæsarea or Kayserieh in Asia Minor. In texture they are totally different from Persian silk rugs.

The colors are quite vivid. The designs are copied either from Persia or antique Turkish makes. We also find some Anatolian silk rugs, with religious subjects reproduced on them.

Such rugs are invariably woven by Greek or Armenian girls. Large silk rugs of Anatolian make are a rarity.

Recently the Sultan of Turkey has started a factory at Hereké, Asia Minor, where about two hundred Mahometan girls ranging in age from

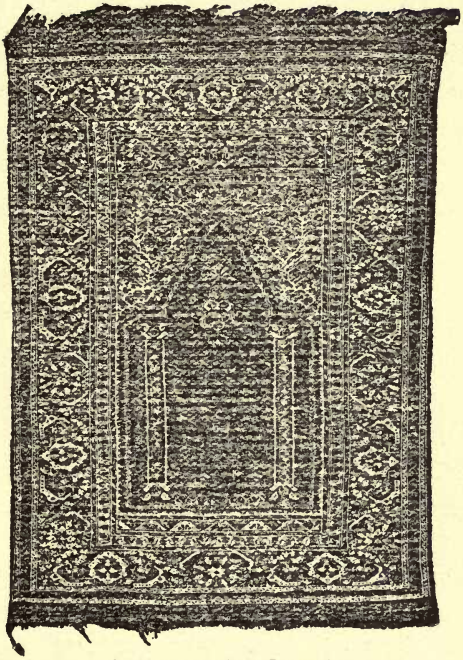
ten years up are employed in weaving the best silk rugs of Turkish make. The colors are exceedingly soft and the designs mostly floral or temple effects.

In texture they are almost as fine as Persian rugs, being very closely woven. The average size is 5.6x3.6 feet.

GHIOERDEZ

Or Yeordez. Antique rugs of this make are almost unobtainable. The average size is about 6.6x4 feet. They have short nap and are without sheen, but the colorings are exquisite soft blues, green and terra cottas.

The centre is of solid color, surrounded by a "mihrab" or entrance to a temple design, with two columns on either side and a lamp or floriation suspended in the centre. They have one wide and several narrow borders, consisting of floral or conventional designs on ivory ground in shades of chrome, pigeon blood, soft blue and green.



Antique Anatolian Ghioerdez.

COULA

The rugs bearing the name of this town are altogether different from the Ghioerdez rugs. They are not very closely woven, and have rather long pile. The size is from medium to about 8x4 feet. The centre design is either floral or of a fish scale effect, and the border usually consists of four or five uniform stripes broken by small rosettes, in green, old gold and pale blue, on a groundwork of ivory.

LADIC

A small village near Konieh, now in ruins, having a population of about five hundred people. Almost all the Ladic rugs are antique, very few modern ones being made.

They come in small door mats, and also in larger oblong pieces. They are easily distinguished on account of the bold designs and contrasting colors, which are usually very rich red, old gold, maroon, pale blues and green. In texture and pile they are similar to Coulas.

MELEZ

This is another town whose products are getting scarce. The rugs made here come in almost square shape, the usual size is 5x4 feet. The texture is also softer and

lighter than the average Anatolian rugs. The patterns in this make are varied. We sometimes find floral designs, and again Mihrab or lozenge effects, in shades of red, soft yellow, ivory and soft blue.

KILIM

Kilim is a sort of tapestry of the Orient. Both sides are nearly alike, having no nap. They come in almost every color and design, and are made altogether by women and girls. The familiar term Kiz Kilim means "girl rug" or "bride rug," and is made by young marriageable girls, ranging in age from twelve to fourteen years, to present as a betrothal gift to their future lords and masters, in order to show their handicraft.

Some of these conceptions are really beautiful, embodying as they do all the romance and poetical feelings that fills the artist's mind. There is another reason why a great deal of care and painstaking is lavished on the making of these rugs. This is that the bride may be considered highly accomplished, because it is by the daintiness of the work that she puts on these rugs that she is judged

Chess Players in a Cafe in Albania.

Zeibeks in Asia Minor.

to a great extent. The Kiz-Kilim with Mihrab or temple design are usually made by Mahometan girls and are used only as a prayer rug. In this country we find them used for portières, couch covers, table scarfs and an endless variety of other uses, where a touch of Orientalism is to be given to a room.

The work is all done by needle, and is in open-work effect.

In size they come from small mats up to 16x8 feet.

BERGAMAS

These rugs are from a small village situated on the Baker Chai (Copper River) in the province of Aïdin, 42 miles northeast of Smyrna. In early times this place was famous for its palaces, tombs and mosques. But the town is in ruins now, having only a population of 3,000 people. The rugs that we get from this village will always be cherished by amateurs, on account of their exquisite soft colorings and subdued effect. They come with conventional medallion design in the centre, and

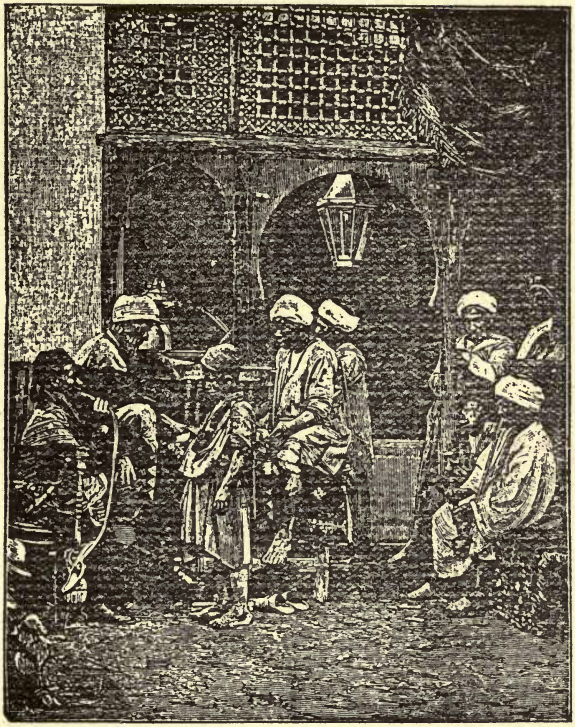
an extra wide border of ivory, yellow and soft blues. They are nearly always of a square shape.

TURKISH CARPETS

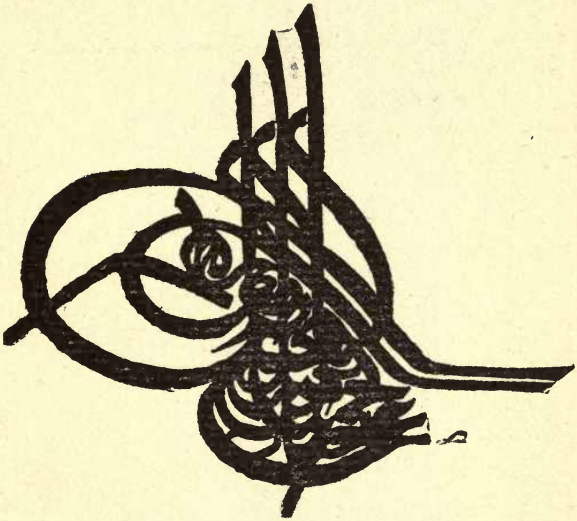
All the large carpets of Turkish make are modern, most of them are manufactured near Smyrna. The pile is heavy and the colorings vivid. They come in all sizes from 10x7 up to 22x17 feet. These carpets are usually made from designs and patterns submitted by the buyers from this country and the European markets.

MOSSOUL

Most of the rugs from this district are made by the nomadic tribes along the Tigris River in Asiatic Turkey. The texture is thick and rather coarse, but they soon acquire a very rich sheen, and they are positively the best rugs on the market for hard service. The colorings are varied but soft and mellow, and the design is either medallion or small figures. The material used is mostly camel's hair. The usual size is seven foot six by three foot six, and also long stripes suitable for halls.



A Cafe in Damascus.



Turkish Coat of Arms.

Having had numerous inquiries in regard to the significance of the hieroglyphic seen so much on the Turkish goods, which is called tughra (or Turkish coat of arms), I will give here as brief an explanation as possible.

If you closely examine this cipher, you will see that it has the shape of a hand. This hand is the imprint of Murad I., or Amurath, son of

Orkhan, born 1319, killed August 27th, 1389, and it originated thus:

The City of Ragusa, in Dalmatia, on the Adriatic Sea, wanted to build a church, and in those days, as well as to-day, no public buildings or churches were allowed to be built unless sanctioned by the Sultan. An iradé (or permit) being necessary, the required document was presented to Murad I. for his signature.

Murad I., not having a scholastic education, simply wet the palm and fingers of his hand and pressed it on the document. The three fingers were held close together, the small finger and thumb were apart. Within the form thus impressed the nishanji-bashi (or head of the scribes), wrote the names of Murad and his father, the title of Khan and the "victor ever." For centuries the form of the tughra, or toghra, remained the same, except the part of the characters, which varied with every succeeding Sultan. The tughra of to-day contains the following Arabic inscription:

"Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid Khan, ben Medjid El Muzafar daima," which translated means "Sultan Abd-ul Hamid Khan, son of Medjid, victor ever."

We are all familiar with the appearance of this insignia, which is on Turkish coins, postage stamps, and at the head of all documents; also more or less perfectly executed on Turkish inlaid mother-of-pearl works and embroideries.

CAUCASIAN OR DAGHESTAN.

DAGHESTAN

Which means mountain land, is a government of Russia. It is a triangular territory of Cis-Caucasia, bordered by the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea. The population is over 600,000, which is made up from a number of tribes. The Lesghians, who are considered the finest specimens of the Caucasian types, are the principal weavers. Daghestan rugs are of a very soft silky texture, the colors are light blue, red, ivory and yellow.

Perfect antique pieces are very much admired. In size they run as large as 8x5 feet.

GUENJA

This is a small town in the province of Daghestan. The rugs woven here are rather coarse, have heavy pile, and come in geometrical designs. Size about 6x3.6 feet.

Colors: dark blues, reds, chrome and yellow.

Street Scene in Cairo.

KAZAKS

These rugs derive their name from the makers, the "Cossacks" of the Caucasus. The designs are very bold and are said to represent a coat of arms. They are thick in pile, coarse and loosely woven, but very rich in colorings. Sizes run about 6x4 feet.

SHIRVAN AND CABISTAN

Rugs are almost similar in texture, but they do not come in the same patterns. They are considered the best makes of the Daghestan family. Neither Cabistans or Shirvans are ever found in large carpets. They usually come in medium-sized pieces.

The Cabistans are perhaps a trifle larger than the Shirvans.

NAMAZI

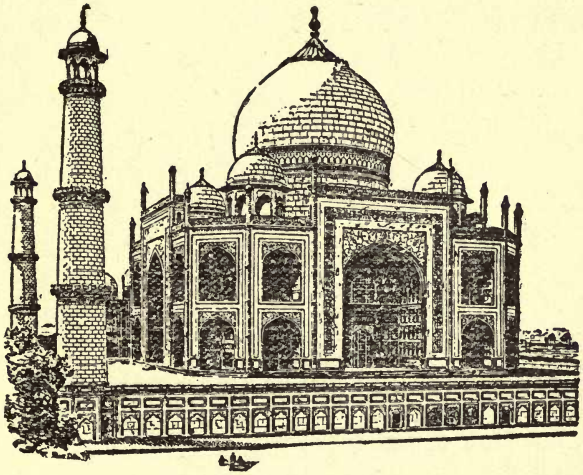
Or Shirvan prayer rug is a design that is familiar to every Oriental rug buyer. This pattern of rug is made by the followers of Mahomet only, and no Mahometan family or traveler is without at least one of these Namazi rugs. According to their religion the faithful Mahometan has to say his prayers

five times a day: at daybreak, 9 A.M., noon, 5 P.M. and 8 P.M. At these hours the muezzins from the balconies of the minarets issue the call to prayer. Immediately every faithful believer, wherever he may chance to be, after taking his ablution, spreads his Namazi rug with Mihrab design pointing towards Mecca, the holy Mahometan city, and prostrates himself in prayer, his forehead and hands resting on certain designs on the rugs.

The prayer lasts but a few minutes at a time, being usually some verses from the Koran. But during that time there is nothing that will interfere or detract his attention from his worship.

CARABAGH

Rugs are made in the black wine district of Daghestan. They come in geometrical and prayer patterns, and sometimes we find one with a peculiar design at one end representing two hands. This is suggestive that the hands be placed there while praying. The antique Carabaghs have very soft colors, but there are not many of them to be found. Most of the pieces on the market now are brand new, with very vivid colors and have no



Taj-Mahal at Agra, India.
A Famous Mausoleum Dedicated to the Memory of a Maharajah's Wife.

fringe. Red, blue and green are the main colors. In size they seldom exceed 8x4.6 feet.

CASHMERE

Or Soumac rugs, as familiarly known in the East, are not made in Cashmere, as their name would imply, but in the Caucasus, along the Caspian sea, in the province of Daghestan. They are all worked with a needle and have no nap, all the tufts of wool being on the reverse side, just like the Cashmere shawls. The designs of these rugs are usually very similar, consisting of three large square or oblong figures in the centre, with diamond shaped medallions on either side and three borders, one wide and two very narrow ones. The outer border invariably consists of zigzag designs.

This make of rug has usually long fringe on the ends. The antique ones have very soft colors, but few of them are on the market. The colors are dark red, blue, orange and white.

In size they are rarely found larger than 11x8 feet.

TURKESTAN OR TURCOMAN.

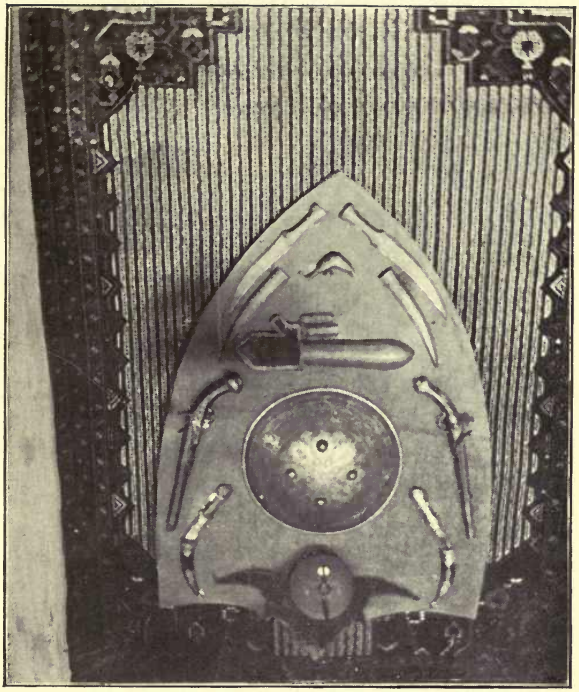
BOKHARA

Is a province of Russia, situated in a plain a few miles from Zaraf-Shan, in the midst of beautiful gardens, and surrounded by an embattled wall twenty-four feet high.

The town is celebrated for its numerous mosques and colleges, which attract students from all parts of Asia.

Another striking feature is its numerous bazaars, which are filled with the richest wares of the East. The principal productions are silks, woolens, rugs and arms.

The rugs that come from this province are justly admired by American people, but unfortunately the real antique ones are almost out of the market. These antique Bokharas are wrongly called "royal Bokharas," I presume, on account of their rich wine color with a touch of velvet. The designs are a sort of octagon lozenge figure all over the rug, with a faint outlining of green, old gold, ivory and dark blue.



A Bit of Cosey Corner.

Antique Samarkand.

They rarely come larger than 10x7 feet. There is another design sometimes found in the small size Bokharas. It is a sort of prayer pattern. The whole ensemble of this rug is a rich maroon with a touch of dark blue and ivory, and the pile is much thicker than the average Bokhara. This prayer design is usually found in size not exceeding 5x4 feet.

SAMARKAND

A city of Western Turkestan in the valley of Zaraf-Shan, among the Tian-Shan mountains. It has two magnificent mosques dating from the seventeenth century, also the Ulug-beg college, and the tomb of Timar and his wives. From the Arabesque decorations, marble pavements, different colored tiles, and the inscriptions of gold in these structures, which are still in almost perfect condition, one can form some idea of the grandeur of the place when it was in its full glory under the rule of "Timar."

The Samarkand (sometimes wrongly called Malgara) rugs are of an exceedingly soft and loose texture. They nearly all have a beautiful

silky effect. The principal pattern is of one or more circles or moon shaped designs in the centre of the piece. Soft yellow, green, orange, red and violet are the principal colors. Antique pieces are exceedingly difficult to find and do not come larger than 10x6 feet.

AFGHAN OR AFGHANISTAN.

KHIVA

Also called Urgenj, a province of Turkestan under Russian rule. The population is about 270,000, mostly nomadic. Khiva, also the name of the capital, consists of mud huts, not excepting the residence of the khan, who is the ruler of this place. The principal products are sheep, goats, horses and camels.

The Khiva rugs differ materially from Bokharas. The pile is much heavier and coarser and Khivas can always be distinguished by the wide selvage on both ends of the rug, also by the very narrow borders and the large octagon shaped figures which form the design of the piece.

The general effect is a rich, dark red background with dark blue, golden yellow and a touch of ivory white. They do not come larger than 12x8.6 feet, and the usual size is 9x6 feet.

YAMOUD

Or Yamoud Bokharas differ in pattern from Khivas and in quality they are finer. In color and size, about the same.

BELOOCH OR BELOOCHISTAN

A country of Southern Asia, bounded on the north by Afghanistan, on the east by Sind, on the south by the Arabian Sea, and on the west by the Persian province of Kerman.

It has two distinct races, the Brahmis and the Beluchis.

The former are very hospitable and generous, the latter a greedy, hungry, cut-throat people, mostly nomadic.

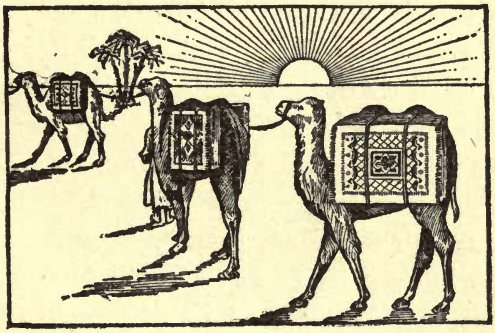
The capital, and about the only town of the whole province, is Kelat, with 15,000 population. The whole country is under British protection.

Beluch or Beloochistan rugs are much in demand on account of their beautiful sheen and silky effect. They are sometimes (wrongly) called "blue Bokharas," I presume on account of being found in similar design and having a bluish shade on the surface.

The colors are dark maroon, brown, pink, ivory

Street Scene in Beyroute.

and a soft shade of blue. They also come with a fancy selvage. Materials used are goats' hair, camels' hair, and wool. In size they are found from the small mats up to 7x5 feet. Larger sizes than this are very scarce.



A WORD TO RUG BUYERS.

The rug buyers of this country have but a very faint idea of the enormous amount of labor and expenditure it requires to bring these rugs into American and European markets.

They are generally collected from house to house in the villages of the interior, and made up into caravans before they start on their long journey, either for Ispahan, Shiraz, Tabriz or Teheran, where they lie for several months and sometimes for years, before a fresh start is made for Tiflis, Trebizond and Smyrna or Constantinople. In these marts each grade is assorted and piled into lots and made ready for shipment to foreign markets. The largest market for all kinds of rugs is Tiflis and Constantinople. From Smyrna they ship mostly the large sized modern carpets made in the interior of Asia Minor.

The principal merchants are Persians, Russians, Armenians and Turks. No goods are sold direct

to a buyer unless he is accompanied by a rug broker, who takes his customer to visit the different khans (or depots), where the goods, office and also the residence of most of the Persian merchants are located.

The rooms in these khans are not very inviting places.

The principal furniture consists of a divan, or perhaps a couple of low chairs for the foreign visitors. Before transacting any business your health is asked after, coffee and cigarettes are served, and if you take a fancy to a narghilé (or water pipe), why, of course, you are politely invited to join in with the rest. These merchants, most of them without any education, are about the shrewdest and most cunning lot of men I have ever come across.

Generally rugs and carpets are sold by the lot, that is to say as they run, good, bad and indifferent. They are then made up in bales and shipped, most of the time, either *via* London or Liverpool, thence for transhipment to New York, Boston or Philadelphia. The Turkish Government levies one per cent. of export duty, and the high duty

charged by this government of late, which is forty per cent. *ad valorem* and ten cents per square foot on every Oriental rug, has added more than fifty per cent. to their original value. The demand for Oriental rugs and carpets has increased to such an alarming extent that in a very short time it will be almost impossible to obtain a really antique piece at what we would consider a reasonable price. The Chicago World's Fair has accomplished a great educational work towards promoting and creating a constant demand for these beautiful floor coverings. Most of the modern houses are finished with hard wood polished floors, with the sole intention of cleanliness, also to minimize the work of house cleaning, and they naturally necessitate some sort of rug instead of covering the floor completely with carpets. It is gratifying to state that it did not take long for the American people at large to find out the unsurpassed merit and durability combined with the beauty of these Eastern works of art.

People who are not familiar with the different qualities of Oriental rugs will do well to patronize some good reliable house, in whose fair dealings

they have confidence, and they will be pretty sure to get good value for their money.

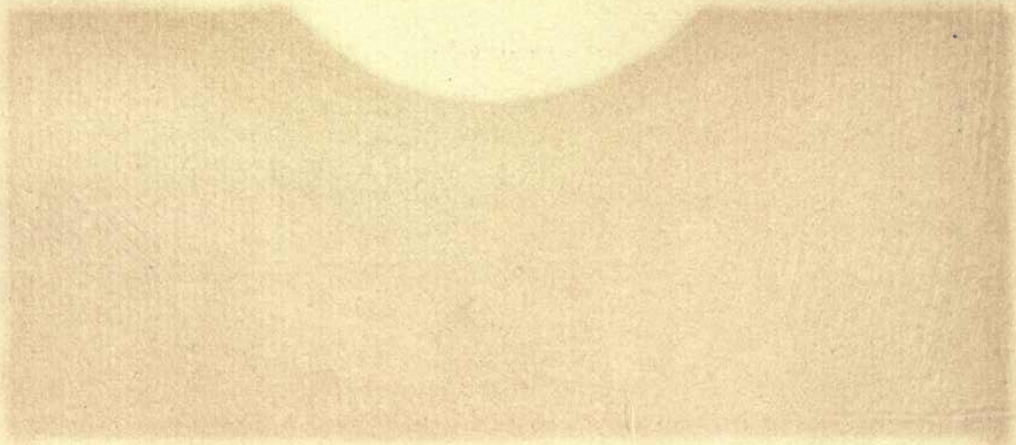
A really good rug is about the best investment a person can make. And judging from the advance in prices in the last five years, it is not a far-sightedness to state that in a very short time the price for fine antique pieces will be threefold.

Some people are very prejudiced about having an old rug in their home. This class of people are the novices and new buyers who demand a bright, vivid colored rug, to wear out themselves.

But after a few years of vain attempt to tone down the color of a new rug they change their ideas and taste, and admit the beauty and soft colorings in an antique and subdued piece.

My advice is to get a choice rug while you can. There will be a time, and not so far distant, when these very weavers of Oriental rugs will be using some of our carpets, on account of the high taxation.

Then the artist will quit his loom and the weaving of Oriental rugs will become a lost art.



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